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Racing with rhetoric: a Byzantine ekphrasis of a chariot race

Abstract: Michael Hagiotheodorites' poem describing a chariot race is usually dismissed as an imitation of the earlier text composed by Christopher of Mytilene. Such an approach ignores the poetical and rhetorical qualities of Hagiotheodorites' work, who, in the introduction, skilfully connected the rhetorical framework with the content. The poem is addressed to an unnamed addressee and a definite identification is not possible. However, certain similarities between this text and the works of Constantine Manasses allow a hypothesis that Manasses might have been the recipient of Hagiotheodorites' letter-poem.

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Introduction

The aim of this article is to analyse a short twelfth-century poem composed by Michael Hagiotheodorites, a description, *ekphrasis*, of chariot races (this is explicitly stated by the author – εἰς ἔκφρασιν νύσσοντος αὐτῶν τοὺς δρόμους). Instead of treating Hagiotheodorites' text as a source of historical facts concerning chariot races we will concentrate on its rhetorical and literary qualities and we will address the issue of the identification of a possible recipient of the poem.

The text under discussion is by no means unknown, though to the best of our knowledge it has earned only passing remarks in scholarly literature. It was preserved, quite badly, in the Viennese codex Suppl. gr. 125 (old signature by Horna: Vind. Suppl. 3935) and was edited twice: by Konstantin Horna in 1906 together with a speech by Constantine Manasses and a second time by Pa-

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PADIMITRIOU in 1911.[1] Its author, Michael Hagiotheodorites, held important offices at the court of Manuel I and was a man of "great wealth and opportunities for patronage".[2] The poem is incomplete; only 105 verses are preserved in the manuscript. There are a few lacunae and, as it seems, the order of the verses is also incorrect in some places.[3] We can date the poem quite precisely – the chariot races described by the author took place on February 1, 1168 so we can safely surmise that the poem itself was written not much later than this. The precise date of the race is given by the author himself:

Πρώτης τρεχούσης ἰνδικτιῶνος χρόνου
πρώτης μεσούσης χειμερίνης ἡμέρας
φεβρουαρίου μηνὸς ὑδατορρόου
εἰκοστοπέμπτῳ τῆς βασιλείας χρόνῳ
αὐτοκρατοῦντος Μανουὴλ βασιλέως.

During the first indiction and the first winter afternoon of the rainy month February in the twenty-fifth year of the reign of Emperor Manuel.[4]

1 H. HUNGER / C. HANNICK, Katalog der griechischen Handschriften der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek. Teil 4. Supplementum graecum. *Museion. Veröffentlichungen der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek. N.F.*, 4/1. Wien 1994. Editions: K. HORNA, Eine unedierte Rede des Konstantin Manasses. *Wiener Studien* 28 (1906) 194–197. – We did not have the opportunity to consult the second edition by S. PAPADIMITRIU, Partii Ippodroma i dima v XII stoletie, in: Serta Borysthenica. Sbornik v čest' zaslužennago professora Imperatorskago universiteta sv. Vladimira Iuliana Andreeviča Kulakovskago. Kiev 1911, 89–95. The edition of Horna was reprinted, with some comments, in B. BALDWIN, An anthology of Byzantine poetry. Amsterdam 1985, 83–90.

2 See P. MAGDALINO, The empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143–1180. Cambridge 1993, 256. Hagiotheodorites' biography is also discussed in I. D. POLEMIS, Constantine Psaltopoulos and his unpublished address to Michael Hagiotheodorites. *Byzantinische Forschungen* 21 (1995) 159–165, esp. 159–160.

3 It seems that after verse 77 there is a break and some verses are missing.

4 The races described by Hagiotheodorites are in fact those of τὸ μακελλαρικὸν ἱπποδρόμιον, τὸ λεγόμενον Λουπέρκαλ, the Lupercalia races – according to R. Guilland the date of Lupercalia in Constantinople was movable and depended on the date of Easter, see R. GUILLAND, Études sur l'Hippodrome de Byzance. *Byzantinoslavica* 26 (1965) 31; see also V. GRUMEL, Le commencement et la fin de l'année des jeux à l'Hippodrome de Constantinople. *ÉO* 35 (1936) 432: the final date was "la semaine dite *apocreos*, et vraisemblablement le dimanche qui clôturait cette semaine." See also C. MANGO, Daily life in Byzantium, in: *XVI. Internationaler Byzantinistenkongress, Akten* I/1, *JÖB* 31/1 (1981) 347, and G. DAGRON, L'organisation et le déroulement des courses d'après le Livre des Cérémonies. *TM* 13 (2000), 9–200. In 1168 Easter fell on 31 March and 1 February was Thursday.

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This text usually serves, together with a similar but earlier work by Christopher of Mytilene (eleventh century), as proof that even in the later period four teams (Green, Blue, Red and White) raced in the Hippodrome.[5] Alan Cameron, quite undeservedly, described the poem as a "less lively imitation" of the above mentioned work by Christopher of Mytilene.[6] Such criticism is not justified for Christopher's text is quite badly preserved and as such a just comparison is in fact impossible. However, both texts are unusual since they are both *ekphraseis* of a chariot race – the only two such texts from Byzantium, if we are not mistaken. There were, of course, ancient *ekphraseis* which focus on an event in action – a famous example being the *ekphrasis* in the *Aeneid* where Aeneas looks at the depictions of the Trojan War (I 44 – 493). In one panel Troilus is depicted as being dragged by his chariot. While the Latin text describes the motion of the chariot as if visualized as a work of art, the *ekphrasis* by Hagiotheodorites is more direct as it describes precisely what is happening before the eyes of the narrator.

The discussion on *ekphrasis* as such is ample and there is no reason to repeat it here.[7] Much has been said about the role of *ekphrasis* in the narrative fabric in general, as well as in Byzantine texts.[8] Though primarily associated with the description of a work of art (whether it be a small piece or something as large as a church) the ancient theoreticians of *ekphraseis* have given us an entire list of things that can be described, amongst them events such as the following:

5 See A. Cameron, Circus Factions: Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium. Oxford 1976, 45. The text was briefly described by H. Hunger, Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner. *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft*, 12.5.1 – 2. Munich 1978, I 178. For the new edition of Christopher's text see: Christophoros Mytilenaios, Versuum variorum Collectio Cryptensis, ed. M. De Groote. Turnhout 2012, no. 90, 83 – 87.

6 Cameron's opinion was repeated by Baldwin in his anthology: "That [poem] of Christopher is reckoned as superior by Alan Cameron (...) and not without a reason" – B. Baldwin, Anthology (as footnote 1 αbove), 83. Baldwin spared his readers explanation as to why Cameron was right.

7 Generally on ekphrasis see A. Hohlweg, Ekphrasis. RBK 2 (1971) 33 – 75; R. Webb, Ekphrasis. Imagination and persuasion in ancient rhetorical theory and practice. London 2009. An example of a modern approach to the ancient problem is the article by D. P. Fowler, Narrate and describe: the πroblem of ekphrasis. *JRS* 81 (1991), 25 – 35. On ekphrasis in Byzantium see V. Vavřínek / P. Odorico / V. Drbal (eds.), Ekphrasis. La représentation des monuments dans les littératures byzantine et byzantino-slaves. Réalités et imaginaires. *Byzantinoslavica* 69, Suppl. 3. Prague, 2011; H. Maguire, Nectar and illusion: nature in Byzantine art and literature. Oxford 2012, especially the chapter "Nature and rhetoric". On the study of ekphraseis as clues to optical perception see R S. Nelson, To say and to see. Ekphrasis and vision in Byzantium, in: R. S. Nelson (ed.), Visuality before and beyond the Renaissance. Seeing as others saw. Cambridge 2000, 143 – 168.

8 Recently see I. Nilsson, Narrating images in Byzantine literature: the ekphraseis of Konstantinos Manasses. *JÖB* 55 (2005) 121 – 146.

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(...) γίνεται δὲ ἔκφρασις προσώπων τε καὶ πραγμάτων καὶ τόπων καὶ χρόνων. (...) πραγμάτων δὲ οἷον [φράσις] πολέμου, εἰρήνης, χειμῶνος, λιμοῦ, λοιμοῦ, σεισμοῦ. (...).[9]

There are *ekphraseis* concerning people and events and places and periods of time. (...) *Ekphraseis* of events include, for example, descriptions of war, peace, a storm, famine, plague, an earthquake (...).[10]

Ekphraseis can be either a part of a text (starting with the ever-famous description of the Shield of Achilles in the *Illiad*) or they can be independent. In the twelfth century such independent *ekphraseis* were written, for instance, by Constantine Manasses.[11] Independent *ekphraseis*, especially those, which describe an event in action, raise some theoretical issues as to their position in the traditional binary opposition of "narration" and "description". Gérard Genette noticed that "purely descriptive genres never exist and we can hardly imagine a work where the narrative works as the auxiliary to the description (...)".[12] It could be argued, however, that this is exactly what happens in both Manasses' independent *ekphraseis* and in the Hagiotheodorites' poem – the description in fact constitutes the narrative. To paraphrase Genette, in the case of Hagiotheodorites' poem, narration is *ancilla descriptionis*. Therefore, the present text is a story narrated by means of description. And it seems that ancient theoreticians recognized that such a form was indeed quite possible. Pseudo-Hermogenes' treatise *On Invention* distinguishes between three types of narration – plain, elaborate and confirmatory where elaborate narration is associated with *ekphrasis*. The anonymous Byzantine treatise on rhetoric, *On the four parts of the perfect speech*, describes the elaborate narration (ἐνδιάσκευος) as ekphrastic, which "recounts everything in detail and all but brings the actions before the eyes" (ἐνδιάσκευος δὲ ἡ ἐκφραστικὴ καὶ λεπτολογοῦσα τὸ καθέκαστον, καὶ εἰς ὄψιν μονονοὺ παράγουσα τὰ πραχθέντα).[13] The treatise retells the story of Ajax

9 L. Spengel, Rhetores Graeci II. Leipzig 1854 (Repr. 1966), 117 – 118.

10 G. A. Kennedy (transl.), Progymnasmata. Greek textbooks of prose composition and rhetoric. Atlanta 2003, 45.

11 See I. Nilsson, Narrating images (as footnote 8 above) 121 – 126 and eadem, Constantine Manasses, Odysseus and Cyclops, in Vavřínek/Odorico/Drbal, Ekphrasis (as footnote 7 above) 123 – 136.

12 G. Genette, Boundaries of narrative. *New Literary History* 8 (1976) 6.

13 Περὶ τῶν τεσσάρων μερῶν τοῦ τελείου λόγου, ed. C. Walz, Rhetores Graeci 3. Stuttgart 1834, 576. Translation after Webb, Ekphrasis (as footnote 7 above) 209. On the treatise itself Th. M. Conley, Rummaging in Walz's Attic: two anonymous opuscula in Rhetores Graeci. *GRBS* 46 (2006) 101 – 122: 103. The text is available in a new edition with German translation and commentary: W. Hörandner, Pseudo-Gregorios Korinthios, Über die vier Teilen der perfekten

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slaughtering the cattle using all three types of the narrative. As Ruth Webb notes, the elaborate, ekphrastic narration highlights not only the appearance of things and people but also the details of actions.[14] The dating of the treatise is uncertain but a similar discussion also appears in the twelfth-century work by John Tzetzes's *Exegesis in Homeri Iliadem*.[15] Tzetzes, even though he does not explicitly link elaborate narration with *ekphrasis* as such, explains that elaborate narration is as if someone were to paint and to bring things to life before their eyes by recounting them skilfully (τὸ ὥσπερ ζωγραφεῖν καὶ ὑπ' ὄψιν ἄγειν τὰ πράγματα, τῷ τεχνικῶς αὐτὰ ἀφηγεῖσθαι).[16] A twelfth-century example of such elaborate narration could be for instance Manasses' *ekphrasis* of a crane-hunt.[17] We propose that Hagiotheodorites' work is yet another example of such elaborate narration. The situational framework of both texts is analogous – the actual event is mediated by a narrator who describes what he saw (the narrator in Manasses' text says: ἔγωγέ τοι θήρᾳ γεράνων παρατυχὼν καὶ τῆς τούτων θέας ἐμφορηθεὶς καὶ ἰδών (...); δοτέον τοίνυν τὰ ὁραθέντα γράφῃ).[18] Therefore, the narrative situation of both texts – the narrative voice (who speaks?) and focalisation (who sees?) is similar. The narrator is to be equated with the spectator – of the chariot race and the hunt – thus unifying both roles as the narrator and focaliser and becoming the so-called narrator-focaliser. External focalisation is often compared to the eye of a camera and this is exactly what happens in Hagiotheodorites' poem – as the narrator is able, at the same moment, to perceive both the race and the reactions of the audience. In a way this applies to every ekphrastic description but both in Manasses' and in Hagiotheodorites' works

Rede. *Medioevo Greco* 12 (2012) 87 – 131. Hörandner's edition differs, however, from Walz's text, see Hörandner, ibid. 88.

14 Webb, Ekphrasis (as footnote 7 above) 66.

15 Conley, Rummaging (as footnote 13 above) 115.

16 A.C. Lolos, Der unbekannte Teil der Ilias-Exegesis des Ioannes Tzetzes (A 97 – 609). Königstein 1981, scholion to line 432. Byzantine interest in vivid recreating events can be perhaps also seen in Michael Psellos' comparison of Euripides and George of Pisidia where he mentions that the Athenians "fancied that they beheld the spoken word as living action". Psellos' essay underlines the power of rhetorical *enargeia* – both texts on chariot races can undoubtedly be seen as exercises of testing the limits of that rhetorical power, cf. A.R. Dyck, Michael Psellus. The Essays on Euripides and George of Pisidia and on Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius. Vienna 1986, 44; P. 1 A. Agapitos, Scholars and poets in Byzantium interpret Heliodorus, in R. Hunter (ed.), Studies in Heliodorus. Cambridge 1998, 138 – 139.

17 E. Kurtz, Еще два неизданныхъ произведеиія Констаитниа Маиассн. *VV* 12 (1906) 69 – 98; Th. A. Nema, Η έκφρασις κυνηγεσίου γεράνων του Κωνσταντίνου Μανασσή. Thessaloniki 1984.

18 Nema, ibid. 2 and 3 respectively; Kurtz, Неизданныхъ произведеиія (as footnote 17 above), 80, 28 – 29; 59.

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the narrator is also a participant of what he later describes.[19] The lack of the intermediary image showing the hunt and the race is what makes the situation of the narrator of both texts special.

Watching is believing – a proem to the text

The main difference between the texts of Christopher of Mytilene and Hagiotheodorites is the rhetorical introduction. A theoretical proem to an independent *ekphrasis* is certainly nothing unusual.[20] However, the theoretical introduction in Hagiotheodorites' text is much more elaborate than what we have seen (or what is preserved) in Christopher's work:

ἰδοὺ θέατρον ἐκ λόγων σοι δεικνύω
ἵππους ποδώκεις, τοὺς ἰαμβίους στίχους
ἐφ' ἁρμάτων μὲν ῥητορικῆς ζευγνύων
ἡνιόχους ἄνωθεν αὐτῶν καθίσας
τὰς τοῦ λογισμοῦ δυνάμεις λογοστρόφους
ἡνιοχοῦντος τὴν φοράν μοι τῶν στίχων
εἰς ἔκφρασιν νύσσοντος αὐτῶν τοὺς δρόμους,
νύσσῃ σαφηνείας δε καθαρωτάτης
ὀρθοῦντος αὐτοὺς ῥητορικαῖς ἡνίαις (...)
ὅρα νοητῶς ἱππικὴν ἀγωνίαν.

Look, I show you a theatre of words, swift-footed horses, iambic verses joining together on the chariots of the rhetoric, having placed charioteers on them, *logostroπηοi* of the powers of the story, which is holding the reins of the flow of my verses [and] spurring their races to *ekphrasis* at the turning post of the clearest vividness setting them straight with rhetorical reins (...) watch, in your mind's eye, a chariot race.

This fragment, skilfully composed by Hagiotheodorites, is especially difficult to render in English because some words have double meanings, for example ζευγνύμι means 'to join together' but also "το saddle and bridle". The rhetorical charioteers are described as λογόστροφοι – those who turn the words (*die Worte verdrehend*)[21], the word unattested before Hagiotheodorites' poem. The creation of the poem is described as racing – the text is controlled by the rhetorical reins and the turning posts of the race are described as the turning posts of

19 Nema, ibid. 14.
20 Nilsson, Narrating images (as footnote 8 above) 124 on the theoretical introduction in one of Manasses's *ekphraseis*.
21 *LBG* 5 (2005) 947.

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the clearest vividness (νύσσῃ σαφηνείας δὲ καθαρωτάτης, σαφήνεια being itself a rhetorical term connected with *ekphrasis*[22]) while *ekphrasis*, to paint with words an image in action, itself is the ultimate aim, or to put it in the terms used by Hagiotheodorites, is the finish of his rhetorical race. Both, Christopher's and Hagiotheodorites' texts strongly highlight that the aim of the authors is to (re)create the chariot races with their words. [23] Hagiotheodorites' work describes the chariot race in such a way that the recipient could (re)create his own mental image of the event (ὅρα νοητῶς ἱππικὴν ἀγωνίαν, v. 21). *Ekphraseis* are about painting an image with words, creating a vivid image for both readers and listeners. The ancient theoreticians define it as follows: "*ekphrasis* is descriptive speech, as they say, vivid and bringing what is being shown before the eyes" says Hermogenes. A very similar definition is made by Aphthonios – "*Ekphrasis* is descriptive language, bringing what is shown clearly before the eyes."[24] This is evidently indicated by the phrase "θέατρον ἐκ λόγων"[25] which is supposed to verbally recreate the "θέατρον τοῦ δρόμου," racing spectacle (this is the term used by Christopher of Mytilene). Λόγος is a powerful tool in Byzantium, one which is capable of creating or recreating reality. Thus, the spectacle is mirrored, or even recreated, in the words of the poem (Christopher in his poem explicitly

22 There were two terms closely connected with *ekphrasis* – *enargeia* and *sapheneia*, both mentioned as virtues (*aretai*) of an *ekphrasis* by Hermogenes. See also G. Zanker, Enargeia in the ancient criticism of poetry. *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 124 (1981) 297 – 311. As Zanker noticed (p. 298), "sometimes enargeia is used almost interchangeably with ekphrasis; an example is the Anonymous Seguerianus who defines it as a λόγος ὑπ'ὄψιν ἄγων τὸ δηλούμενον". On *enargeia* in *ekphrasis* see also A. Manieri, L'Immagine poetica nella teoria degli antichi. Phantasia ed enargeia. Pisa/Roma 1998. It is interesting that another rhetorical term closely associated with *ekphrasis*, *enargeia*, never appears in the text. It might be so because at that time it was disassociated from, or perhaps very loosely connected with, vivid representation and, as Stratis Papaioannou recently showed, came to denote "truth behind and beyond any aesthetic representation, whether discursive or visual", S. Papaioannou, Byzantine enargeia and theories of representation, in Vavřínek/Odorico/Drbal, Ekphrasis (as footnote 7 above) 50.

23 Similar efforts by Christopher were described in such a way by A. Hohlweg, Ekphrasis (as footnote 7 above) 58: "wobei Christophoros mit allen Mitteln versucht, die Bewegung dieses Pferdes bis zur Illusion der Wirklichkeit lebendig zu machen." *Ekphrasis* may describe any kind of event, including very complex ones as in the case of the games organised by Antiochus Epiphanes (Athenaios, 5, 194 f.), however, it is difficult to imagine a more "moving" action to describe than the chariot race.

24 Kennedy, Progymnasmata (as footnote 10 above) 86 and 117 respectively.

25 For later times see for instance the use of the phrases τὸ τῆς γλώττης θέατρον (no. 20a) and θέατρον γλώττης ἀκούων (no. 38) in the letters of Gregoras.

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used the word 'κάτοπτρον').[26] To use an anachronistic comparison – Hagiotheodorites projects a film. This is strengthened by the use of words which denote watching and showing (ἴδου, δεικνύω, ὅρα, ἴδε). *Ekphraseis*, as Webb says, were to make listeners not only aware of what happened but to make them feel as if they were witnesses themselves.[27]

Theatre of words – the performative aspects of the poem

As mentioned above, Hagiotheodorites uses in the poem the phrase "the theatre of words" (θέατρον ἐκ λόγων, v. 11), which might refer not only to the way of (re) creating the spectacle but also may hint at the way of performing the text itself. To appreciate the rhetorical text fully it should be delivered orally, this is how rhetorical texts are performed. This was a well-established custom and there is no reason to think that Hagiotheodorites' work was an exception.[28] By whom

26 Interestingly enough, a similar comparison to the mirror was expressed in the work *De simulatione* by Eustathios of Thessalonika. However, the learned bishop meant watching the sufferings and speeches of the actors impersonating ancient characters. He seems to suggest not only that the audience saw, as if in the mirror, various virtues but also that the rhetorical tools helped "visualise" those virtues, see *PG* 136, 373. On mirrors in literary contexts see S. Papaioannou, Byzantine mirrors: self-reflection in medieval Greek writing. *DOP* 64 (2010) 81–101.

27 Webb, Ekphrasis (as footnote 7 above) 193.

28 See for instance a suggestion by Margaret Mullett which sounds today even more convincing than when it was written: "The most uncompromisingly literary works, it is now accepted, were written for performance in the *theatra* of Constantinople. This viewpoint has been greatly facilitated by the work of social anthropologists and psychologists (as well as oral historians and the students of folk poetry); using this theoretical perspective it begins to look as if Byzantinists should identify as exceptional those texts which were *not* written for performance" – M. Mullett, Writing in early mediaeval Byzantium, in: R. McKitterick (ed.), The uses of literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe. Cambridge 1990, 159–160. On theatra see N. Gaul, Thomas Magistros und die spätbyzantinische Sophistik. Studien zum Humanismus urbaner Eliten in der frühen Palaiologenzeit. *Mainzer Veröffentlichungen zur Byzantinistik*, 10. Wiesbaden 2011, 17–53; P. Marciniak, Byzantine Theatron – a place of performance?, in M. Grünbart (ed.), Theatron: Rhetorische Kultur in Spätantike und Mittelalter / Rhetorical culture in late antiquity and the middle ages. Berlin 2007, 277–285 I. Tóth, Rhetorical theatron in late Byzantium: the example of Palaiologan imperial orations, in Grünbart, Theatron, ibid. 429–448; I. P. Medvedev, The so-called *ΘΕΑΤΡΑ* as a form of communication of the Byzantine intellectuals in the 14th and 15th centuries, in N.G. Moschonas (ed.), Η επικοινωνία στο Βυζάντιο. Πρακτικά του Β΄ Διεθνούς Συμποσίου. Athens 1993, 267–235. On rhetoric and performativity see E.C. Bourbouhakis,

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and in what circumstances it was performed is impossible to determine. Poems that function as letters to friends, and Hagiotheodorites' text is undoubtedly one such example, were not read by the authors, which makes these texts somewhat exceptional.[29] Most probably, such poems/letters were read out by an addressee himself in a *theatron* composed of his peers and friends. Thus, aurality and all its defining factors, played an important role in receiving performed texts.[30] Hagiotheodorites in the introductory verses draws a clear parallel between the fast feet of the horses and iambic verses – ἵππους ποδώκεις, τοὺς ἰαμβίους στίχους. The metrical structure of the poem is yet another tool used to help recreate mentally, νοητῶς as Hagiotheodorites says, the image of the chariot races. The text is written in the so-called Byzantine dodecasyllable, the default metre of Byzantine poetry.[31] However, the dodecasyllable itself, pure and plain as it is, is also quite a complicated metre. Mainly because it is a result of a compilation of two, basically different, systems, i.e. ancient prosody based on the quantities of syllables and 'modern' versification based on stress accents. And while for ancient audiences the value of prosody was obvious, and probably similar to the rhythm of music (which does not necessarily coincide with word accents), for the Byzantines the prosodic system could only be detected by the eye but this 'dynamic' system was purely for the ears. Therefore, different rules coexisted in the dodecasyllable – written rules for prosody, sanctified by tradition of the iambic trimeter, and unwritten rules governing the actual rhythm. The written and well-known rules in the case of 'Byzantine prosody' differ from the ancient rules on one point only – the trimeter has to be pure, that is, unresolved. Therefore, the metre consists of twelve syllables – dodecasyllable – and the pattern goes

Rhetoric and performance, in P. Stephenson (ed.), The Byzantine World. London and New York 2008, 175–187.

29 See P. Magdalino, Cultural change? The context of Byzantine poetry from Geometres to Prodromos, in: F. Bernard / K. Demoen (eds.), Poetry and its contexts in eleventh-century Byzantium. Burlington 2012, 33.

30 A.F. Stone, Aurality in the panegyrics of Eustathios of Thessaloniki, in Grünbart, Theatron (as footnote 28 above) 419–428.

31 P. Maas, Der Byzantinische Zwölfsilber. *BZ* 12 (1903) 278–322, especially 301–303. About Byzantine metricians and remarks on rhythm, see M. Lauxtermann, The velocity of pure iambs. Byzantine observations on the metre and rhythm of the dodecasyllable. *JÖB* 48 (1998) 9–33, *passim*. See also W. Hörandner, Beobachtungen zur Literarästhetik der Byzantiner: Einige byzantinische Zeugnisse zu Metrik und Rhythmik. *Byzantinoslavica* 56 (1995) 279–290; M. Lauxtermann, The Spring of rhythm. An essay on the political verse and other Byzantine metres. Vienna 1999. See also A. Rhoby, Vom jambischen Trimeter zum byzantinischen Zwölfsilber. Beobachtung zu Metrik des spätantiken und byzantinischen Epigramms. *Wiener Studien* 124 (2011) 117–142.

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as follows: × – υ – × – υ – × – υ – (where '–' means a long syllable, 'υ' means a short syllable and '×' means an anceps). There are two possible pauses: penthemimeres, after the fifth syllable (B5) and hephthemimeres, after the seventh syllable (B7).[32] And everything would be fine if the Byzantines had been able to recognise long and short syllables as the ancients could. But since they were unable to detect the difference between them, the entire process of verse-making was artificial and extremely difficult. Unsurprisingly then, there are 'prosodic' mistakes in Byzantine poems and they are in the text under discussion: out of 105 preserved verses 42, that is 40 % of the poem, include syllables of incorrect length. But if we take into consideration the entire number of syllables that could have been mistaken, the number of errors is much smaller, no more than 4 %. The syllables with mistakes are most often ones that are included either in words of Latin origin, as ἰνδῑκτῐ̈ωνος, φεβρουᾱρῐ̈ος (v. 1 and v. 3), or in proper names, as Μανοῡηλ, πρᾰσῐ̈νος, ῥουσῐ̈ος, βενετος, μαππαρῐ̈ος (v. 5; v. 35, 53, 70, 72, 73, 82, 104; v. 76; v. 80, 90; v. 47) or in words that were needed in certain positions for rhetorical reasons, such as ἡνῐ̈οχους/ἡνῐ̈οχου at the beginning of the verse (v. 14, 32) or βαλβῑδος/βαλβῑδα/βαλβῑδων at the end of the verse (v. 31, 35, 46, 55, 71). If the dodecasyllable is indeed structured according to its ἔννοια, that is, the logical and syntactical constituents of the sentence, the final excuse (rhetorical reasons) could be even more justifiable than the first two (words of Latin origin and proper names).

Considering the rhetorical character of this poem we might suspect that the rhythm here is also not something accidental. This kind of text must make special use of the notion that "both the Byzantine dodecasyllables and rhetorical prose are referred to as possessing the quality of *gorgotes*, or "rapidity/velocity."[33] The concept of rhythm derives from rhetoric[34] and what has a rhetorical value, apart from the already mentioned ἔννοια, is γοργότης – velocity. In cases of the dodecasyllable, this velocity was achieved by unresolved iambs – always faster than resolved ones – and by the arrangement of stress accents. [35] It

32 Maas introduced the term *Binnenschluss* to describe this pause/caesura: Maas, Zwölfsilber, ibid. 282; Rhoby, Trimeter, ibid. 117 – 118.

33 V.V. Valiavitcharska, Rhetoric and rhythm in Byzantium. The sound of persuasion. Cambridge 2013, 77.

34 Lauxtermann, Velocity (as footnote 31 above) 24.

35 Hunger, Literatur (as footnote 5 above) II 92. According to Herbert Hunger's observations of the scheme of the dynamic system would go as follows: with B7: × × × × – υ υ | × × × – υ; with B5: × × × × – | × × × × × – υ, where "_" always means stressed syllables, "×" means syllables that can be accented and "υ" means syllables that are never accented. As we can see the rules are not very strict and poets could use them freely to avoid the monotony of rhythm caused by their 'pure iambs.'

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seems that the most strictly defined was the paroxytonic verse ending and this rule is always obeyed in Hagiotheodorites' text. The author's preferred pause was penthemimeres (this occurs in about 70 % of preserved verses). In the case of the verses where he uses hephthemimeres, the fifth syllable is always stressed while the sixth and seventh are never stressed. It would be interesting to see whether there are any 'accentual patterns' in the poem, but since we do not have the whole text and some verses might not be put in the right order it would be pure guesswork. Nevertheless, it is tempting to say that the first part of the text is especially organised according to some pattern in terms of rhythm. We may observe that the first six verses, which contain a description of the date of the event, are constructed in a very similar manner: in the first, second and third verses, the first hemi-verses with paroxytonic endings, contain the penthemimeres pause and the second hemi-verses contain accents on the ninth, eight and seventh syllable respectively; these verses tell us the date of the event according to the calendar and season, in the next three verses the date is determined by the reign of Emperor Manuel and the rhythm pattern from the first three verses is repeated in almost the same way (there is a slight difference in the sixth verse). In the seventh verse, where we finally learn what has happened, there is a sudden change of caesura (from B5 to B7) and the rhythm is clearly different. The accents in the first six verses make the poem go faster and faster in order to slow down a little in the sixth verse and finally stop in the seventh verse where we also find the information we were expecting. Thus, we would argue, Hagiotheodorites very successfully employs rhythm to highlight rhetorical qualities of the text.

From Constantinople with love – the poem and its addressee

The title of the poem in the manuscript had faded but Horna deciphered it as follows:

> … τοῦ λογοθέτου τοῦ δρόμου πρός τινα ἐν ἀγρῷ οἰκοῦντα ἀξιώσαντα … πῶς ἐν τῇ πόλει ὁ ἱππικὸς ἀγὼν γέγονε …
>
> [Verses] of the logothete of dromos to somebody living in the country, who sought [to learn] about the chariot race in the City.

The title bears an obvious resemblance to the title of Christopher of Mytilene's poem:

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(Πρὸς τοὺς ἐ)ν τῷ ἀγρῷ ἀπόντας φίλους, ἱπποδρομίας ἀγομένης ἀπολειφθέντας καὶ ἀξιώσαντας (μανθάνειν τὰ) περὶ αὐτῆς.
To my friends, who were away in the country and missed the races taking place at the hippodrome and sought to learn about them.[36]

The reason why the author wrote the text under review was a willingness to narrate a chariot race that took place on that day.

ἐπεὶ δὲ τοῦτον οὐχ ἑώρακας, ξένε,
ἀγροῖς ἐθισθεὶς προσμένειν φιλησύχως
ὡς ἀταράχως προσλαλεῖς τοῖς βιβλίοις
ἰδοὺ θέατρον ἐκ λόγων σοι δεικνύω …

Since you did not see it (i. e. a chariot race), O stranger, having become used to staying away peacefully in the country in order to speak undisturbed with books, look, I show you a theatre of words.[37]

Once again, this introduction is very similar to the introductory verses written by Christopher.[38] The situational framework of both texts is almost the same – a description of a race to somebody who did not see it. [39] However, in our text the recipient (addressee), though still unnamed, is much better presented:

ἐνασχολεῖσθαι λοιπὸν ἀφεὶς ταῖς βίβλοις,
ὅρα νοητῶς ἱππικὴν ἀγωνίαν

36 Translation after A-M. Talbot, The lure of the Hippodrome in the middle Byzantine era, in B. Pitarakis (ed.), Hippodrome. A stage for Istanbul's history. Istanbul 2010, 67.

37 Horna, Rede (as footnote 1 above), 8 – 11.

38 E. Kurtz, Die Gedichte des Christophoros Mitylenaios. Leipzig 1903, 90:
Ὅπως μὲν εἶχεν ἱππικὸν τὸ χθές, φίλοι,
(ποίους δὲ τοὺς ἀ)γῶνας εὗρε τοῦ δρόμου,
ἀποῦσι καὶ θέλουσι μανθάνειν γράφω,
(ποιῶν) ὑμῖν ἕκαστα δῆλα πρὸς μέρος,
ὡς ἄν γε καὶ δόξητε, φίλτατοι φίλων,
(ὡς ἐκ κατόπ)τρου τῶν παρόντων μου [*μοι = de Groote 2012] λόγων
τῷ χθὲς θεάτρῳ συμπαρεῖναι τοῦ δρόμου …
A-M. Talbot, The Lure of the Hippodrome …, 67: My friends, since you were absent and wish to learn how the equestrian events went yesterday and which races took place, I write [these verses], making every detail clear for you, so that, dearest of friends, you may seem to have been present yesterday at the racing spectacle, as if in a mirror of my present words …

39 The entire introduction to the poem seems to be modelled on the work by Christopher of Mytilene which follows a well-established tradition of using older material and the same *topoi*. On the use of older material in *ekphraseis* as well as the use of various *topoi* see H. Maguire, Byzantine descriptions of works of art. *DOP 28* (1974) 127 – 140.

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μικρὸν προκύψας ὡς Πυθαγόρας πάλαι
ἐκ τῶν θυρίδων τῆς σοφῆς Καλλιόπης,
ὄρους Ἑλικῶνος δε μᾶλλον εὐδρόσου
ὅπου μονάζων ὡς φιλῳδὸν στρουθίον
ᾄδεις λιγυρὰς μουσικὰς μελῳδίας
δι' ὧν γλύκαινεις ἀκροατῶν καρδίας
ἴυγξιν αὐτοὺς ἑλκύων σου τῶν λόγων.
κλύων τὸ λοιπὸν ἁρμάτων δρόμους ἴδε.[40]

So leave your books aside, watch, in your mind's eye, a chariot race, having leaned like Pythagoras did in former times out of the window of wise Kalliope, or even the Mount Helikon rich in water, where alone like a song-loving sparrow you sing sweet musical melodies, with which you sweeten the hearts of listeners enchanting them with your words [...] so listening watch the racing spectacle.

The identity of the unnamed addressee is difficult, if not impossible, to establish. He is described as ξένος rather than φίλος though it is clear that Hagiotheodorites is writing to a friend. Ξένος may customarily be used as a synonym for a monk, so he can indeed be deemed as a stranger to the world. The addressee is compared to a singing sparrow (μονάζων ὡς φιλῳδὸν στρουθίον). This is a slight variation of Psalm 101 (102), 8 – ἐγενήθην ὡσεὶ στρουθίον μονάζον ἐπὶ δώματι. Even though the imagery of a sparrow singing in solitude is a widely used topos, it seems that in the 12th century it was especially attractive for Constantine Manasses.[41] Manasses evokes similar imagery at the end of the first part of the *Hodoiporikon* (ναὶ ναί, γενοίμην ὑπὸ τὴν πτέρυγά σου /καὶ διατηροίης με καθὰ στρουθίον),[42] in the second part of the same poem (καὶ μουσικὸν γὰρ ἐγκαθειρχθὲν στρουθίον) and in the *Synopsis Chronike* (μονάζον ἐπὶ δώματος ἐγένετο στρουθίον), where it is almost a verbatim use of the Psalmic quotation.[43] It should also be noted that Manasses was the author of a monody on the death of his sparrow.[44] Moreover, it seems that the lines ὡς ἀταράχως προσλαλεῖς τοῖς βιβλίοις/ ὅπου **μονάζων** ὡς φιλῳδὸν **στρουθίον** from Hagiotheodorites' poem mirror the following passage from the *Hodoiporikon* (II, 89 – 96):

40 Horna, Rede (as footnote 1 above), 20 – 29.

41 We managed to find only one more instance of using it in the twelfth century in Michael Choniates' oration (Or. 3, p. 90): ᾄδει ὡς στρουθίον μονάζον ἐπὶ δώματος.

42 K. Horna, Das Hodoiporikon des Konstantin Manasses. *BZ* 13 (1904) 325 – 347: I 335 – 336.

43 ibid. II 141. O. Lampsidis, Constantini Manassis Breviarium Chronicum. *CFHB*, 36. Athens 1996, v. 5764.

44 Edited in K. Horna, Einige unedierte Stücke des Manasses und Italikos. *Jahresbericht Sophien-Gymnasium* 1901/1902. Wien 1902, 3 – 9. Manasses (p. 4) calls his sparrow μουσοφόρητος and says that he used to call him a son of the Muse Terpsis.

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ἢ τί πρὸς αὐτὴν τὴν Κωνσταντίνου πόλιν
ἡ Κύπρος ἡ σύμπασα καὶ τὰ τῆς Κύπρου;
ὦ μόχθος, ὦ μάθησις, ὦ σοφῶν βίβλοι,
αἷς συνεσάπην ἀνοήτως ἐκ νέου·
ὦ σώματος κάκωσις, ὦ νυκτῶν δρόμοι,
ἃς ἀνάλωσα ταῖς βίβλοις ἐντυγχάνων,
ἄϋπνος, οὐ βλέφαρα κάμπτων εἰς ὕπνον,
ὥσπερ **μονάζων στρουθὸς** ἐν δωματίῳ.

So, in comparison with the city of Constantine, what's Cyprus in its wholeness and particulars? Oh strain, oh education, oh these learned men's books with which from childhood I was uncomprehendingly stuffed! Oh torment of my body, oh these lengthy nights which I spent amongst my books reading them, sleepless, not letting my eyelids droop in sleep as a sparrow alone upon the house top.[45]

Manasses' slightly changes the Biblical passage, most likely for metrical reasons (μονάζων στρουθός instead of στρουθίον μονάζον). Hagiotheodorites goes further and in his version μονάζων refers to the person, the addressee, not to the bird. The reason was, perhaps, to reinforce both the solitude of the recipient of the letter signalled already by the word ξένος, and the fact that he was a monk. It may not be a pure coincidence but the use of a similar quotation may hint that Hagiotheodorites consciously alluded to Manasses' work. Chronologically it is possible since the *Hodoiporikon* work was written before the poem under discussion.[46]

The muse Kalliope and Mount Helikon (μικρὸν προκύψας ὡς Πυθαγόρας πάλαι/ἐκ τῶν θυρίδων τῆς σοφῆς Καλλιόπης) signify poetry, and hence a possible allusion to the recipient's profession as a poet. *Leaning out of the window* may refer to temporarily leaving aside the addressee's literary activities (with perhaps high expectations as to the quality of Hagiotheodorites' work) so he could read/hear about the chariot race.

Two possible interpretations are conceivable. One could be that Hagiotheodorites is writing to a friend, who might be a monk or somebody living in a monastery, which could be possibly identified as Hosios Loukas located on the slopes

45 Translation after W.J. Aerts (with corrections), A Byzantine traveller to one of the Crusader States, in K. Ciggaar /H. Teule (eds.), East and West in the Crusader states. Contexts – contacts – confrontations III. Louvain/Dudley, 2003, 199.

46 On the dating and new interpretation of the poem se I. Nilsson, La douceur de dons abondants: patronage et littérarité dans la Constantinople des Comnènes, in P. Odorico (dir.), La face cachée de la littérature byzantine. Le texte en tant que message immédiat. Actes du colloque international, Paris, 5–6–7 juin 2008. Paris 2012, 179–193.

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of Mount Helikon.[47] The words φιλησύχως and ἀταράχως contribute to creating the vision of a place cut off from the busy world of the Empire's capital. However, it remains doubtful whether a monk would be so eager to learn about chariot races. What is more, the literary imagery, which is notably classicizing (Pythagoras, Mount Helikon, muse Kalliope) perhaps invites a more 'secular' interpretation. We would be inclined, therefore, to propose a different solution. We know that Constantine Manasses was a correspondent of the logothete, Michael Hagiotheodorites, the author of the poem, and that he wrote a eulogy for the logothete as well.[48] It seems that there are some resemblances between the phrases from the *Hodoiporikon* quoted above and Hagiotheodorites' text, also on a vocabulary level (Manasses: ἀνοήτως; Hagiotheodorites: νοητῶς). The word used by Hagiotheodorites to describe February, ὑδατόρροος is *hapax legomenon*, however a cognate noun, also *hapax legomenon*, is to be found in Manasses' *Chronicle* (v. 477: ὑδατόρροια). The title of the poem is somewhat troubling for our interpretation since it states that the recipient was away in the country. However, two explanations seem possible. Since Hagiotheodorites uses Christopher's text as his hypotext (and Christopher uses exactly the same phrase), the title creates a similar excuse, so to speak, to narrate the story. If we take this phrase literally, perhaps it may be connected to Manasses' possible falling out of favour and living somewhere outside of the City.[49] This would also explain the use of ξένος, which may mean a wanderer/refugee, as well as other words (φιλησύχως and ἀταράχως), which were supposed to highlight the solitude of the addressee and to create literary tension between the addressee's calm and peaceful abode and a completely opposite world of chariot races. Hagiotheodorites, thus, in our opinion, could refer to someone who is in exile and who is a poet, since apart from the allusion to Helikon and Kalliope, he quite explicitly praises the addressee's ability to sing sweet musical melodies. According to this interpretation the introduction of the poem engages in a literary game with Manasses' own text(s). If Manasses was "ein Spezialist für Ekphraseis," as Herbert Hunger described him[50], not only from our point of view but also for the Byzantines, it would make perfect sense to send a letter to him in the

47 E. Rentetzi, Il monastero di Hosios Lukas in Focide. *Ειρμός* 1 (2004) 227 – 381.

48 A letter from Manasses to Hagiotheodorites was also edited by Horna, Rede (as footnote 1 above) 185.

49 Prof. Ingela Nilsson was kind enough to offer us her unpublished lecture on Manasses in which she discusses Manasses' possible problems as depicted in his texts.

50 Hunger, Literatur (as footnote 5 above) I 183.

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form of an *ekphrasis*. We know next to nothing about Manasses' later years,[51] which allows only speculations but it would be tempting to combine the two interpretations given above and assume that the poem might have been addressed to Manasses, when in exile in some monastery.

Conclusions

To formulate conclusive remarks is difficult for we have at our disposal only fragments of the composition. We would tentatively identify the addressee as being Constantine Manasses. By the time it was created in 1168, Manasses was an established poet and his renown as the author of *ekphraseis* might have been well founded. Undoubtedly, Hagiotheodorites follows his predecessor, Christopher of Mytilene, in many ways. But, as far as we can judge having only fragments of the preserved texts, he develops his rhetorical introduction by closely connecting the form (framework – rhetoric) with the content (the description of the chariot race) by using words that have double meanings – they belong both to the semantic field of rhetoric and to horse racing. From this point of view our text is not a "less lively imitation" but a creative development. A creative development, which perhaps was encouraged by Manasses' own texts, such as the description of a crane-hunt. Hagiotheodorites' poem may also be seen as an interesting reminder that wealthy patrons of Byzantine writers were themselves trained rhetorically and they could use the same discourse as their protégés. And, as the skilfully composed proem to Hagiotheodorites' poem proves, not unsuccessfully.

51 On Manasses biography see O. Lampsidis, Constantini Manassis ... (as footnote 44 above), XIII–XVII, and also his: Zur Biographie von K. Manasses und zu seiner Chronike Synopsis (CS). *Byz* 58 (1998) 97 – 111. Lampsides, however, does not discuss the period mentioned in the poem.

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